

AMENDMENT

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-6. Canceled.

7. (Currently amended) A laser machining method for cutting a workpiece by moving the workpiece relative to a laser beam shining means while applying a laser beam to the workpiece by said laser beam shining means, which comprises:

a protective film coating step of coating a to-be-machined surface ~~to-be-machined~~, of the workpiece with a protective film;

a laser beam shining step of applying a laser beam to the workpiece through said protective film; and

a protective film removal step of ~~removing~~ washing away said protective film by water after completion of said laser beam shining step,

wherein said protective film is formed by coating said to-be-machined surface with a liquid resin and allowing the resulting coating to be hardened with the passage of time, and wherein said liquid resin is water-soluble.

8-11. Canceled.

12. (Original) The laser machining method according to claim 7, wherein the workpiece is a semiconductor wafer.